

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARAMA 00312 152020Z
ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3292
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USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 0312

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, OAS, NS
SUBJ: VISIT OF IADB CHAIRMAN

SUMMARY: BOTH GOS AND IADB CHAIRMAN SUMNER REGARD SUMNER'S
APRIL 13-15 VISIT TO PARAMARIBO AS HAVING ACHIEVED ITS OBJECT-
IVES OF ORIENTATION AND AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ABOUT THE IADB.
ARRANGEMENTS FOR VISIT WERE MODEST AND PUBLICITY SO FAR HAS
BEEN LIMITED.

1. LT. GEN. GORDON SUMNER, CHAIRMAN OF THE INTER-AMERICAN
DEFENSE BOARD, VISITED PARAMARIBO AT INVITATION OF THE GOS
APRIL 13-15 TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE SURINAM MEMBERSHIP IN THE
IADB. SUMNER, WHO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE AND AIDE DE
CAMP MAJOR J. DUBOIS (WHO ARRIVED ONE DAY EARLIER) IN FACT
HAD ONLY ONE DAY FOR MEETINGS WITH GOS OFFICIALS GIVEN LOCAL
AIRLINE SCHEDULES.

2. IN PROGRAM ARRANGED ENTIRELY BY GOS, SUMNER CALLED ON ACTING
PRESIDENT ENSBERG, MINISTER-PRESIDENT ARRON, COORDINATING
MINISTER FOR DEFENSE AFFAIRS HOOST (WHO IS ALSO MINISTER OF
JUSTICE AND POLICE), AND COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE SURINAM ARMY
COL. Y. ELSTAK. SUMNER WAS GUEST OF HONOR AT A LUNCH FOR MILI-
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 PARAMA 00312 152020Z

TARY STAFF AND AT AN EVENING RECEPTION GIVEN BY ARRON IN HIS
CAPACITY AS MINISTER FOR GENERAL AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS BUT HOSTED
BY MINISTER HOOST.

3. PUBLICITY REGARDING VISIT SO FAR HAS BEEN LOW KEY, IDENTI-
FYING SUMNER ONLY IN HIS CAPACITY AS CHAIRMAN OF IADB AND DES-
CRIBING VISIT AS A FOLLOW-UP TO DISCUSSIONS HELD BY MINISTER

HOOST WITH OFFICIALS OF IADB IN WASHINGTON IN FEBRUARY. GOVERNMENT NEWS RELEASE REPORTS THAT DURING THOSE DISCUSSIONS, VIEWS WERE EXCHANGED ON SURINAM'S ADHERENCE TO THE RIO TREATY, TRAINING POSSIBILITIES FOR SURINAM ARMY PERSONNEL (CIVILIAN AND MILITARY), AND OTHER POSSIBILITIES FOR COOPERATION. TELEVISION BROADCAST NEWS REPORTS OF VISIT AND THREE MAJOR PAPERS HAVE CARRIED PHOTOGRAPHS OF GEN. SUMNER BEING RECEIVED (IN UNIFORM) BY ACTING PRESIDENT, ARRON AND HOOST.

4. IN KEEPING WITH SUMNER'S INTERNATIONAL STATUS, CHARGE DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN ANY MEETINGS HELD BETWEEN GOS OFFICIALS AND SUMNER AND ATTENDED ONLY EVENING RECEPTION, AT WHICH HEADS OF ALL EIGHT RESIDENT DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS (INCLUDING GUYANESE AMBASSADOR SAUL) WERE PRESENT IN ADDITION TO THE ACTING PRESIDENT AND MINISTER PRESIDENT ARRON. ONLY NETHERLANDS AMBASSADOR ASKED CHARGE ABOUT SUMNER'S VISIT; CHARGE DESCRIBED SUMNER'S INTERNATIONAL FUNCTION AND NOTED HE HAD COME AT INVITATION OF GOS STEMMING FROM DISCUSSIONS HELD BY SURINAM DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON AT TIME OF SURINAM'S ADMISSION TO THE OAS.

5. SUMNER TOLD CHARGE HE WAS SATISFIED WITH RESULTS OF HIS VISIT, SAYING HE BELIEVED OBJECTIVES OF ORIENTATION ON HIS PART AND EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH REGARD TO ROLE OF IADB HAD BEEN ACHIEVED. SUMNER SAID HE WAS IMPRESSED BY ATTITUDE HE HAD ENCOUNTERED ON PART OF ARMY OFFICERS AND SAID HE HAD SUGGESTED THAT COL. ELSTAK VISIT WASHINGTON SOMETIME SOON TO SEE HOW THE IADB FUNCTIONS AT FIRST HAND. SUMNER ADDED IT WAS HIS JUDGMENT THE GOS HAS ALREADY TAKEN THE POLITICAL DECISION TO JOIN IADB
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 PARAMA 00312 152020Z

AND HE FORESAW NO GREAT DIFFICULTY IN ACCOMPLISHING THIS HE SAID HE HAD POINTED OUT THAT ANYTHING THE IADB MIGHT DO FOR SURINAM WOULD BE IN ADDITION TO AND NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR ANY EXISTING BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS.

6. PRIME MINISTER ARRON TOLD CHARGE AT RECEPTION THAT HE WAS STILL AWAITING REPORT ON RESULTS OF DISCUSSIONS WITH SUMNER BUT THOUGHT SURINAM "HAD NO CHOICE" WITH REGARD TO JOINING IADB. GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE STATED THAT GOS IS STILL CONSULTING ABOUT SURINAM'S ADHERENCE TO RIO TREATY.

7. CHARGE DID MEET PRIVATELY WITH MAJOR DUBOIS AT HIS REQUEST PRIOR TO GEN. SUMNER'S ARRIVAL. DUBOIS CONFIRMED THAT HE HAD URGED LOW-KEY APPROACH ON SURINAMERS WHILE DISCUSSING SUMNER'S PROGRAM BUT THAT THEY HAD WANTED SUMNER TO WEAR UNIFORM AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE AND HAD ALREADY ARRANGED FULL PROGRAM OF CALLS. AT RECEPTION, HOWEVER, BOTH SUMNER AND DUBOIS WERE DRESSED IN CIVILIAN CLOTHING.

8. COMMENT: EMBASSY BELIEVES SUMNER VISIT MADE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE GRADUAL INTEGRATION OF SURINAM INTO THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM ALTHOUGH SUMNER MAY HAVE RECEIVED SOMEWHAT MORE EXPOSURE THAN WE MIGHT HAVE DESIRED. AT THE SAME TIME, FACT THAT GEN. SUMNER IS ALSO AN AMERICAN OFFICER WAS NOT HIGH-LIGHTED, AND U.S. WAS NOT DIRECTLY IDENTIFIED WITH THE VISIT IN ANY WAY WHICH COULD RAISE UNWARRANTED SUSPICIONS OF OUR INTENTIONS REGARDING ANY MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH SURINAM.
LORTON

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